



## Admissions Arrangements and Policy 2024/2025

### School Vision statement

At Christ the Sower Ecumenical Primary School we provide the ‘good earth’ for all in our community to flourish; where every member can fully explore who they are created to be, with the high expectation that we, individually and collectively, will bear fruit beyond our wildest dreams. A loving place where we all care, learn and grow together.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Policy Level:</b>                                |   |
|   | 2   |
|   | <p><u>ODBST Statutory and Mandatory Policy</u> All schools must adopt these policies with local amendment strongly discouraged. These policies are centrally amended and binding on LGBs from the date of Board approval. They must be displayed on the School’s website. Approval for all proposed local amendments apart from where highlighted must be sought from the ODBST Governance Lead prior to Local Governing Body resolution.</p> |
| <b>Other related ODBST policies and procedures:</b> | Level 5 Guidance: The education of children out of their chronological year group.  |
| <b>Committee responsible:</b>                       | Finance Resource, Audit, Pay & Personnel  |
| <b>Date Approved:</b>                               | September 2022  |
| <b>Date for Next Review:</b>                        | September 2023  |

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## ODBST Vision and Values

“Empowering our unique schools to excel”

We aspire for every pupil and adult to ‘experience life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10)



Each of our schools has a unique character of its own and we will work to ensure that this vision embraces all our pupils and adults, regardless of background and belief.

We empower our schools to deliver a broad, enriched and exciting curriculum, coupled with a shared zest for life and learning.

We have identified 4 core values: **Inclusivity, Community, Service, Empowerment** that resonate with what we believe the ODBST Learner and Leader should follow. They reflect the values that are central to our schools and the diocese. Through our values, we aim for excellence for everyone in our Trust. Building on the uniqueness of our pupils, families and school communities, we strive to enable everyone to develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually.

## CTS VISION

At Christ the Sower Ecumenical Primary School we provide the ‘good earth’ for all in our community to flourish; where every member can fully explore who they are created to be, with the high expectation that we, individually and collectively, will bear fruit beyond our wildest dreams. A loving place where we all care, learn and grow together.

### 1. Introduction

These are the 2024-2025 admission arrangements for Primary Schools in the Oxford Diocesan Bucks School Trust (the Trust).

### 2. Admission Authority

For the purpose of the [School Admission Code](#) and this policy, academies are schools set up under a Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the proprietor of an Academy Trust. Academy Trusts and their schools are required by their funding agreements to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions. For each school in the Trust, the responsibility as the admission authority falls to the Academy Trust. It is the responsibility of Trustees as the admission authority to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with the Code.

### 3. The Admissions Policy for 2024-2025

The Admissions Policy will be used to allocate places at those schools which are oversubscribed.

### 4. Specific Criteria

#### Looked after children and previously looked after children

The highest priority MUST be given to looked after children and previously looked after children who have been adopted. The criterion must include any children who “appear to have been in state care outside England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted” (internationally adopted, previously looked after children - IAPLC). The admission authority is responsible for determining whether a IAPLC child is eligible.

#### Social and medical criteria

Trustees recommend to all our schools that they should include social/medical criterion immediately after the looked-after children criterion. Such priority represents the Trust’s commitment to those most in need. ODBST also includes the medical or social needs of a parent under such a criterion, which is the reason for mentioning ‘families’ in the model policies.

#### Siblings

Care must be taken over the drafting of this criteria bearing in mind the timing of when it will be applied i.e; it is impossible to know for certain whether a sibling will still be at the school at a date in the future. The Trust suggests: “with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school”.

#### Use of Church affiliation criteria

Our Diocese (ODBE) does not encourage the use of church affiliation criteria in their admissions policies. Trustees note that almost all C of E schools were established to educate the ‘poor of the parish’ with no requirement for families to be members of the church and will work with its Local Governing Bodies to remove such faith criteria from future admission policies.

#### Catchment Area

The catchment area should be clearly defined. The criteria should use the same method to measure distances as the LA and the policy should repeat the actual wording used by the LA to indicate how those distances will be measured to avoid confusion. If a different form of measurement is being used, it should be made very clear in the policy, describing how it works.

#### Pupil premium priority

Priority may be given to children eligible for pupil premium, service premium or early years pupil premium within their oversubscription criteria, but it is not a requirement. Schools introducing such priority must make clear in their admission policies what information evidence of their eligibility for the relevant pupil premium is required. Where the LA does not include an appropriate question on the CAF, a school would need to seek the information on a supplementary information form (‘SIF’). Parental consent would be needed for the LA or a child’s current school to disclose pupil premium eligibility in connection with an application.

#### Children of staff

Schools can prioritise children of staff where either they have been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of the application for admission and/or the member of staff is recruited to fill a vacant post at the school for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

#### Reception Class entry

It is a legal requirement under the Code) that “admission authorities must provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday.” Some schools make arrangements for Reception children to come to school part time for the first few weeks and then gradually increase the attendance to full

time. Some parents may have problems with childcare if the school only offers part-time attendance for the first few weeks, particularly where children have been full-time in a nursery or similar setting prior to starting school. Our view, shared by the Schools Adjudicators, is that the clear intention of the Code is to make it compulsory to offer the full-time place from the first day of the Autumn Term.

### **Supplementary information forms**

With the removal of additional criteria such as church attendance there should be no need for any supplementary information requests apart from the Common Application Form (CAF) used by the co-ordinating authority.

### **Co-ordination of in-year admissions**

Both Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes provide for in-year co-ordination of applications. Trustees would recommend schools to continue to be part of this.

### **Waiting list**

When oversubscribed, the admission authority must maintain a waiting list for at least one term in the academic year of admission. The policy must be made clear in the published arrangements and be clear, fair and objective. It must not give priority to children on the basis of the date that their application was received or when their name was added to the list. The oversubscription criteria must be used to rank children on the waiting list.

### **Deferred entry and admission of children outside of their normal age group**

Parents may request that their child's entry be deferred until later in the year where they are still below compulsory school age. The Trust must consider the circumstances of the case. It is not possible to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday nor beyond the year for which the original application was accepted.

Where parents seek a place for their child outside the normal age group, the admission authority must make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child.

### **Summer born children**

The current Code requires Trustees to consider carefully the circumstances of the case made by the parents of a summer born child and to take a decision in the best interests of the child. ODBST schools will act as in the model policy until there has been a change in the Code, but that GBs look favourably on cases for later entry.

## **5. Christ the Sower School CONSULTATION Policy for Admissions 2024/25 (Primary, Infant or First School)**

Christ the Sower School is part of the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST), who are the admissions authority for the school. The Board of Trustees work in partnership over the consultation and operation of the individual schools' admissions policy but hold to the Board of Trustees the agreement to the admissions policies of its academies.

At Christ the Sower Ecumenical Primary School we provide the 'good earth' for all our children to flourish; where every child can learn and explore who they are created to be, with the high expectation that we, individually and collectively, will enable every child to be and do the best they can.

A loving place where we all care, learn and grow together.

The Trust has made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes and equal opportunities.

In reviewing this policy the Trust Board has had regards to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged.

The Trust last consulted on its admission policy in 2020-21.

The governors have made every effort to ensure that these arrangements comply with the School Admissions Code 2021 and all relevant legislation, including that on infant class sizes (where relevant) and equal opportunities.

In reviewing this policy the Trust Board has had regard to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged.

### **Admission numbers**

Christ the Sower Ecumenical Primary SCHOOL has a published admission number of 30 for entry in the Reception Year.

### **Application Process**

Pupils are normally admitted at the beginning of the school year (1 September – 31 August) in which they reach their fifth birthday. Parents whose child was born between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020 may apply for them to be admitted to the Reception Year in September 2024.

Parents of a child whose fifth birthday falls between 1 September 2024 and 31 March 2025 may defer entry until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term beginning in January or April after his or her fifth birthday). The school will hold the deferred place for the child (provided it is taken up during the school year 2024/25), although children may benefit from starting at the beginning of the school year, rather than part way through it.

For children whose fifth birthday falls between 1 April 2025 and 31 August 2025 (summer born children) parents can defer the date that their child is admitted to school but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age ie when they reach their fifth birthday. They should apply at the usual time for a place in September 2024 together with a written request that the child is admitted outside his or her normal age group to the Reception year in September 2025. NB parents would need to provide supporting reasons for seeking a place outside the normal age group and should discuss the position with the head teacher as early as possible. The school will consider the request carefully and, if it is agreed, this should be clear before the national offer day (17 April 2024), so their application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before any place is offered. They should then reapply in the normal way (no later than 15 January 2025) for a Reception place in September 2025. If their request is refused, the parents must decide whether to wait for any other offer of a place in September 2024 (NB it will still be subject to the over-subscription criteria below) or to withdraw their application and apply in the second half of the of the summer term 2025 for a Year 1 place in September 2025. Parents should be aware that the Year 1 group may have no vacancies and it could be full with children transferring from the 2024/25 Reception Year group. NB agreement by the school in 2024 to defer

does not guarantee a place in September 2025 – the normal over-subscription criteria apply.

Until the child reaches compulsory school age, s/he may attend part-time. If parents wish to exercise this right, they should discuss detailed arrangements with the head teacher.

**Parents (see Note 1) wishing to apply for the Reception [Foundation] Year in September 2024 must complete the common application form provided by their home local authority (the home LA). The home LA is the LA in whose area the parents live at the time of the application. The form must be returned to that LA no later than 15 January 2024. Applications received after this date will normally only be considered after all those received on or before the cut-off date. Offers and refusals of places will be sent by the home LA on 17 April 2024.**

or

Procedures for applying to any school in Milton Keynes are explained on Milton Keynes Council's website:

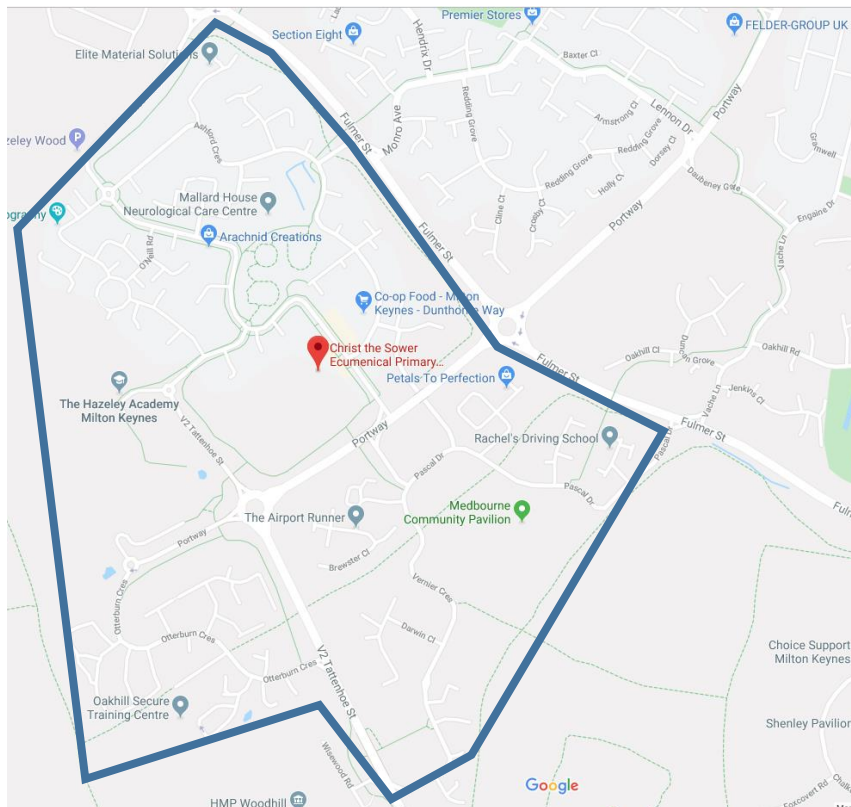
<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/school-admissions>

## **6. Over-subscription criteria**

Children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan naming **Christ the Sower School** will always be offered places. If there are fewer applications than places available, all children will be offered places. If there is greater demand for admission than there are places available, the following criteria will be applied in the order set out below:

1. Looked-after children and children who were previously looked after, including those children who appear to have been in state care outside England, but ceased to be so as a result of being adopted. (See Note 2)
2. Families who have exceptional medical or social needs that make it essential that their child attends Christ the Sower School rather than any other. These needs must be fully supported by written evidence from the appropriate professional person involved with the family. (See Note 3)
3. Children with a normal home address (See Note 4) in the catchment area, which for Christ the Sower School includes the Grange Farm, Medbourne and Oakhill areas of Milton Keynes, and with a sibling (see Note 5) on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
4. Children with a normal home address in the catchment area, which for Christ the Sower School includes the Grange Farm, Medbourne and Oakhill areas of Milton Keynes
5. Children with a normal home address outside the described catchment area and with a sibling on the roll of the school at the time of application or whose parent has accepted an offer of a place at the school and who is expected still to be in attendance at the time of entry to the school.
6. Other children.

Proximity of the child's home, as measured by the straight line distance (see Note 6) between the home and the school with those living nearer being accorded the higher priority, will serve to differentiate between children in criteria 1 to 6 should the need arise. In the event that two distance measurements are identical, the school will use random allocation to decide which child should be offered the place. The process will be conducted in the presence of a person independent of the school.



### **All Other Admissions**

Admission to the school during the school year depends on whether or not there are places available. All year groups at the school have 30 places. Milton Keynes Borough Council co-ordinates in year applications for our school. As such applications must be made to the council, using their website.

If there is a vacancy, and there is no child on the relevant waiting list with a higher priority (according to the over-subscription criteria 1-6 above), a place will be offered.

In-year admissions or admissions at the beginning of school years other than Reception will only be considered by the Governing Body up to half a term in advance of the desired date for entry. For example for entry in January, the application will not be considered until after the October half term break. **Please note that the school does not have a normal point of entry to Year 3 – applications for entry at the beginning of Year 3 are treated as indicated in this section.**

If parents are moving house, the school will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place. Documentary evidence in the form of a solicitor's letter to confirm exchange of contracts, or a rental agreement for at least a period of six months will be required (Armed Forces personnel and crown servants are exempt). If you are returning from elsewhere, to live in a home that you own, we will require evidence to show that you have returned. We will also ask for evidence that any previous house owned has been sold or is being sold. We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

### **Admission outside normal age group**

Requests from parents for places outside a normal age group will be considered carefully, e.g. for those who have missed education due to ill health. Each case will be considered on its own merits and circumstances. However, such admissions will not normally be agreed without a consensus that to do so would be in the pupil's



interests. It is recommended that parents discuss their wishes with the head teacher in advance of applying for a place. The governors may ask relevant professionals for their opinion on the case. It should be noted that if a place in the requested age group is refused, but one in the normal age group is offered, then there is no right of appeal.

### **Waiting Lists**

The school maintains waiting lists for those children who are not offered a place, and the parents ask for the child's name to be added to the waiting list. The order of priority on the waiting list is the same as the list of criteria for over-subscription and does not depend on the date on which an application is received. No account is taken of length of time on a waiting list. The school periodically seeks confirmation that parents wish a child to be kept on the waiting list.

### **Multiple births**

In cases where there is one place available, and the next child on the list is a twin, triplet, etc., we would admit both twins (and all the children in the case of other multiple births) even if this meant exceeding the agreed admission number of 30 for Reception 2023/24 or the number of places in other year groups.

### **Fair Access**

The school participates in Milton Keynes Council's Fair Access Protocol. Children qualifying under the Fair Access Protocol may be offered a place even if there are no places available in the relevant year group and also take priority for admission over any child on the waiting list.

### **Appeals**

There are established arrangements for appeals against non-admission. Details are available from the school, including the date by which an appeal should be submitted. It should be noted that, in the event of an unsuccessful appeal against non-admission to the school, the school does not consider any further application in the same school year (1 September – 31 August), unless there has been a material change in circumstances, for example a change of address which results in a move from outside the catchment area to inside it.

Parents who wish their children to attend the school are most welcome to visit. Arrangements can be made through the Admissions Officer at the school.

### **Admissions in September 2023 (This information will need to be added once known)**

The school received [redacted] applications expressing a preference for admission to the Reception Year in 2023 by the closing date in January 2023. These were ranked as follows:

|   | Number |
|---|--------|
| Children with statements or EHC plans naming the school |        |
| Criterion 1   |        |
| Criterion 2   |        |
| Criterion 3   |        |
| Criterion 4   |        |
| Criterion 5   |        |
| Criterion 6   |        |

[redacted] places were offered, with the cut-off coming under criterion [redacted] at a distance of [redacted] miles

### **Further information**

For further information please contact the school office on 01908 867356 or by emailing school@ctsmk.org.uk.

## **Notes**

**Note 1** "Parent" is defined in law (The Education Act 1996) as either:

- a) any person who has 'parental responsibility' (defined in the Children Act 1989) for the child or young person; or
- b) any person who has care of the child or young person.

If you are in any doubt, please contact the school for advice.

**Note 2** By a "looked-after child" we mean one in the care of a local authority or being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of its social services function. Previously looked after children are children who have been adopted, subject to child arrangement orders or special guardianship orders. Adopted children are those for whom an adoption order is made under the Adoption Act 1976 (Section 12) or the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Section 46). A 'child arrangements order' is one settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live (Children Act 1989, Section 8, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014, Section 14). A 'special guardianship order' is one appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian/s (Children Act 1989, Section 14A). Applications under this criterion must be accompanied by evidence to show that the child is looked after or was previously looked after (e.g. a copy of the adoption, child arrangements or special guardianship order). Evidence that a child from outside England was previously in state care will be required to come within this criterion. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

**Note 3** When applying under criterion 2 (exceptional medical or social needs), you must include supporting evidence from an independent professional person who is aware of the situation and supports your reasons for preferring Christ the Sower School. This supporting evidence must clearly demonstrate why the school is the most suitable and must illustrate the difficulties that would be caused if your child had to attend another school. The person supplying the evidence should be a doctor, health visitor, social worker, etc. who is aware of your child's or your own case. The school reserves the right to ask for further evidence or clarification where necessary and may seek the advice of appropriate educational professionals where necessary.

**Note 4** By normal home address, we mean the child's home address. This must be where the parent or legal carer of the child lives with the child unless it is proved that the child is resident elsewhere with someone else who has legal care and control of the child. The address should be a residential property that is owned, leased or rented by the child's parent/s or person with legal care and control of the child.

To avoid doubt, where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week or month, the address where the child lives will be determined having regard to a joint declaration from the parents stating the exact pattern of residence. If the residence is not split equally, then the relevant address used will be that at which we are satisfied that the child spends the majority of the school week. Where there is an equal split or there is any doubt about residence, we will make the judgment about which address to use for the purpose of determining whether or not to offer a place. We will take into account, for example, the following:

- any legal documentation confirming residence
- the pattern of the residence
- the period of time over which the current arrangement has been in place
- confirmation from any previous school of the contact details and home address supplied to it by the parents
- where the child is registered with his/her GP
- any other evidence the parents may supply to verify the position.

We may ask for evidence of the normal home address in the form of a recent bill. This could be, for example, the most recent Council Tax bill, utility bill no more than three months old, a current TV licence, buildings and contents insurance, mortgage statement or rent book which shows the address concerned. Parents who are unable to provide this evidence should contact the school to discuss what evidence might be acceptable. If it becomes clear or if there is any doubt that the parents and child are not living at the address given on the application form, the school may seek further evidence. The school works closely with the LA to ensure that places are not obtained at the school on the basis of false addresses, and, in cases of doubt, will take steps to verify the information provided. If a place at the school is offered, and it later becomes clear that the offer was made on fraudulent or misleading information (e.g. a false claim to living in the catchment area), and the school has denied a place to a child with a stronger claim, the school will withdraw the offer of a place. The offer can also be withdrawn even after the child has started at the school.

We regard a child's home address to be where he or she sleeps for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday). We

may ask to see official documentation, such as a child benefit book or medical card if there are reasons why a child does not live at his or her parent's address. For example, if he or she is resident with a grandparent, this needs to be made clear on the application form. If such arrangements are not declared or a relative's address is used on the application, we may consider that a false declaration has been made, and withdraw the offer of a place. Childcare arrangements are **not** sufficient reason for listing another address.

If parents move house after the application has been made, but before any offer of a place has been made, the home LA must be informed.

If parents are moving, we will ask for evidence of the move, when considering any application for a place under the co-ordinated scheme.

We would not accept an address where the one given is that of a second home with the main home being elsewhere. If there are two or more homes, we will check which is the main home, and may refuse to base an allocation of a place on an address which might be considered only temporary. Nor would we accept an address where the child was resident other than with a parent or carer unless this was part of a fostering or formal care arrangement. We would not normally accept an address where only part of a family had moved, unless connected with a divorce or permanent separation arrangement, in which case we would require proof.

There are special arrangements for families of service personnel with a confirmed posting or crown servants returning from overseas. If the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares the relocation date, and if there is a place available, it will be offered even though there is not an intended address or the family is not yet living in the area.

**Note 5** By sibling we mean a brother or sister, half brother or sister, adopted brother or sister, step brother or sister, or the child of the parent's/carer's partner where the child for whom the school place is sought is living in the same family unit at the same address as that sibling. It is helpful if parents make it clear on the application form where the sibling has a different family name. Where there is more than one sibling at the school, only the youngest should be listed on the application form.

**Note 6** Milton Keynes uses straight line distance for admission purposes. The shortest route between a preferred school and the normal home address is measured using a computerised geographical information system. This is specialist software that the council maintains therefore, due to the specialist nature of this software, measurements may appear different to those that can be found online. Each house and school has a unique reference, as do all the redways and paths which are coded at any point of junction such as at an underpass or when it crosses with another path. This enables the programme to calculate the distance from home to school. See Appendix 2

## **7. Objections to and referrals about determined school admission arrangements**

Members of the public can make an objection to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) if they think that the admissions arrangements of a maintained school or an academy do not comply with the 'School Admissions Code' (the Code) or other legislation relating to school admissions.

All admissions authorities must determine their admission arrangements by 28 February every year, even if they have not changed from previous years and a consultation has not been required. Complainants have until 30 June to contact the adjudicator if you have an objection.

If people wish to make an objection they must complete the '[school admission arrangements objection form](#)'

Further guidance is available on the [Office of the Schools Adjudicator web site](#)